

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECLASSIFY UPON RECEIPT EXCEPT PARA 1

TAGS: OEXC UR

SUBJECT: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS: COUNTRY MUSIC USA:SUMMARY
REPORT

FOR DEPARTMENT OPNS CENTER: NOTIFY IRENE CARSTONES,
CU/CP, ON OCTOBER 12

STATE FOR CU/EE, EUR/SOV AND CU/CP

USIA FOR IEE AND ICS AND IBS

VIENNA FOR RPO

SUMMARY: COUNTRY MUSIC SETS SOVIETS' FEET TAPPING;
THEY WANT MORE.

1. MAIN POINTS OF TOUR REPORT FOLLOW FOR DEPARTMENT'S
INFORMATION PRIOR TO WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION OCTOBER 15.
(THIS PARA TO BE DECLASSIFIED BY CU/CP.)

2. AIRGRAM AND FURTHER PRESS REPORTING FOLLOW. FOR
TOUR DETAILS AND AUDIENCE REACTION, SEE ALSO EMBASSY
USINFOS OF SEPTEMBER 16, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28; OCTOBER 4,
8, 10, 12; AND MOSCOW 14024 AND 15217.

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3. CMUSA'S TWENTY-SEVENTH AND FINAL USSR CONCERT CLOSED LAST NIGHT TO FOOT-STOMPING AND RHYTHMIC APPLAUSE. GROUP DEPARTS ON SCHEDULE OCTOBER 13, LEAVING BEHIND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW COUNTRY MUSIC FANS WHO CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND AND SHARE THE AVERAGE AMERICAN'S FEELINGS, PROBLEMS AND HOPES. SOVIET CULTURAL AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC ALIKE HAVE EMBRACED THIS SOCIALLY-EXPRESSIVE MUSIC AND ARE OPEN TO NEW MUSICAL IDEAS FROM FUTURE GROUPS POSSIBLY RANGING FROM BLUEGRASS AND TRADITIONAL COUNTRY TO CONTEMPORARY POP AND CERTAIN ROCK FORMS. AMERICAN MUSIC REMAINS A TOP MEDIUM TO CONVEY TO SOVIET PEOPLE POSITIVE IMAGE OF A FREE, CREATIVE, VITAL AND "FUN" SOCIETY.

4. AN ESTIMATED SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED PERSONS ATTENDED TWENTY-SEVEN SHOWS IN YEREVAN, TBILISI, BAKU, LENINGRAD AND MOSCOW. ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED OR ARE PLANNED IN KOMSOMOL'SKAYA PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA, LITERATURNAYA GAZETTA, MUZIKALNAYA ZHIZN', LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA, VECHERNIY LENINGRAD, SMENA (LENINGRAD KOMSOMOL PAPER) AND NUMEROUS PROVINCIAL PUBLICATIONS. MANY INTERVIEWS TOOK PLACE DURING LAST WEEK IN MOSCOW AND WILL RESULT IN FUTURE ARTICLES OR CHAPTERS IN BOOKS ON AMERICAN MUSIC. STARTING WELL BEFORE CMUSA'S ARRIVAL, NATIONWIDE RADIO, USING EMBASSY-PROVIDED MATERIALS, BROADCAST SHOWS ON COUNTRY MUSIC. COMMENTS ON THESE PROGRAMS WERE HEARD IN ALL CITIES OF TOUR. MOSCOW TV NEWS HAD EXCERPTS OF CMUSA EARLY IN WEEK OF MOSCOW PERFORMANCES. THE ENTIRE SHOW AS TAPED OCTOBER 10 BY STATE TV FOR BROADCAST DURING OCTOBER KISSINGER VISIT. CONTINUED RADIO COVERAGE IS EXPECTED. VOA DID OUTSTANDING JOB OF STIMULATING NATIONWIDE INTEREST IN COUNTRY MUSIC AND PREPARING AUDIENCES TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT AMERICAN SOCIETY. EMBASSY HAD STEADY FEEDBACK, FROM OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC, ABOUT VOA BROADCASTS DURING TOUR. BY MID-OCTOBER, THERE WERE FEW EDUCATED PERSONS IN MOSCOW AND OTHER MAJOR CENTERS WHO COULD NOT NOD THEIR HEADS AND SMILE WITH RECOGNITION AT THE WORDS "KANTRI MYUZIKA."

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5. ENTIRE CAST CONTRIBUTED TO DELIGHT AND WARM RESPONSE OF AUDIENCES: TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD WITH HIS FRIENDLY, OPEN MANNER AND DEEP, MELLOW SONGS; SANDI BURNETT'S SPARKLE AND ENTRANING VOICE; THE TOP PROFESSIONALISM OF THE INSTRUMENTALISTS, ESPECIALLY MARK BARNETT ON BANJO AND JAMES BRYAN ON FIDDLE; GARY CHAPMAN'S BLUES DANCING; THE BRIGHT AND ATTRACTIVE "KIDS" WHO MOVED THE SHOW ALONG AND SHOWED INDIVIDUAL TALENT IN

SOLOS.

6. MANY SOVIETS EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION TO GROUP BEFORE DEPARTURE. VICE-MINISTER OF CULTURE V.I. POPOV, IN SPECIALLY-ARRANGED FAREWELL LUNCH, SAID CMUSA SHOWED A FAVORABLE VIEW OF AMERICAN LIFE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO SOVIETS. THROUGH THEIR COMMUNICATION OF WHAT AMERICANS ARE LIKE IN SMALL TOWNS AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, HE SAID, THEY HAVE MADE A TRUE CONTRIBUTION TO SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND TO PEACE. THE SENIOR PROFESSOR AT LECTURE-DEMONSTRATION GROUP GAVE AT MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY, WHEN ASKED WHY SHE LIKED COUNTRY MUSIC, SAID, "BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO OUR HEARTS." LINES OF ENTHUSIASTIC SOVIETS WIATED OUTSIDE STAGE DOORS IN EACH CITY TO GREET FORD, BURNETT, AND OTHER CAST MEMBERS.

7. IN ADDITION TO A HEAVY CONCERT SERIES, CMUSA PARTICIPATED IN PACKED SCHEDULE OFF-STAGE CONTACTS WITH SOVIETS. (SEE USINFO'S FIRST FOUR CITIES.) OVER FORTY OF MOSCOW'S MOST HIGHLY ESTEEMED MUSICOLOGISTS, INCLUDING FOLK MUSIC SPECIALISTS, FILLED CONFERENCE ROOM OF COMPSOERS UNION FOR INFORMAL BUT WELL-CONCEIVED PRESENTATION BY DR. (OF MUSICOLOGY) GEORGE MABRY, CMUSA MUSIC DIRECTOR; THE BAND, AND SINGER MARY CRAFT. DR. MABRY SANG ILLUSTRATIONS FOR HIS SHORT HISTORY OF COUNTRY MUSIC, THEN TURNED IT OVER TO BAND. THE NATURE OF COUNTRY MUSIC, HANK CORWIN'S STEEL GUITAR, AND MARY CRAFT'S SINGING, AROUSED GREATEST INTEREST IN AUDIENCE AND IT WAS AN HOUR AND A HALF OF GENUINELY WARM AND INFORMED EXCHANGE. AT MOSCOW UNIVERSITY, STUDENTS GAVE RAPT ATTENTION TO THE LECTURE AND CHEERED PERFORMERS WILDLY. ALMOST 300 DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AT AMBASSADOR'S SPASO HOUSE RECEPTION OCTOBER 10 MIXED WITH GROUP AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENJOYED INFORMAL PERFORMANCE BY CMUSA AND THREE PROMINENT SOVIET FOLK ARTISTS (USINFO OCTOBER 11). MARK BARNETT, CMUSA'S BANJOIST, EXCHANGED IDEYAS AT THE RECEPTION WITH ONE OF MOST FAMOUS SOVIET BALALAIKA PLAYERS, MICHAEL ROSHKOV, MERITORIOUS ARTIST OF THE RSFSR, AND ROZHKOVA THAT EVENING CAME TO CMUSA'S CONCERT HALL AFTER HIS OWN CONCERT TO EXCHANGE RECORDS AND GIVE A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BACKSTAGE FOR THE AMERICANS. AT AN OCTOBER 8 LUNCH AT CULTURAL ATTACHE'S APARTMENT, 40 SOVIETS FROM MUSIC CIRCLES AND PRESS TALKED WITH THE GROUP ABOUT COUNTRY MUSIC AND JOINED IN AN INFORMAL JAM SESSION BY BOTH AMERICAN AND SOVIET PERFORMERS. MANY MORE SUCH CONTACTS COULD HAVE BEEN ARRANGED IF CMUSA HAD REMAINED LONGER.

8. EMBASSY UTILIZED EXTENSIVE AND TOP-QUALITY USIA AND DEPARTMENT SUPPORT FOR PRESENTATION OF RECORDS, BOOKS AND BACKGROUND MATERIALS ON COUNTRY MUSIC TO HUNDREDS OF CONTACTS IN ALL CITIES. MOSCOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FLIPPED OVER RPO VIENNA'S PRESENTATIO POSTERS, AND POSTERS WERE EAGERLY ABSORBED BY OTHER FANS. RPO VIENNA'S VERY ATTRACTIVE INVITATIONS TO THE SPASO HOUSE RECEPTION, WITH INSERT EXPLAINING COUNTRY MUSIC, WERE REMARKED ON BY MANY. THE COLORFUL LAPEL PINS WERE EAGERLY SOUGHT AFTER.

9. SOME COMMENTS ON THE SHOW, IF NOT NEGATIVE, AT LEAST WERE TEPID. A FEW MUSICOLOGISTS AND OTHER INFORMED PERSONS FELT THE SHOW WAS NOT BEST AMERICA HAD TO OFFER IN COUNTRY AND POPULAR MUSIC. SEVERAL PERSONS COMMENTED IT APPEALED PRIMARILY TO THOSE OVER TWENTY-FIVE. A FEW WERE TURNED OFF BY THE SHOW'S COMMERCIALIZED GLOSS. BUT MOST WERE SWEEPED UP BY THE SLICK, OPRYLAND, TV-SPECIAL TYPE FORMAT, AND FOUND THE SHOW ENORMOUSLY ENTERTAINING. THE TOUR SHOWED THERE IS VAST AUDIENCE IN USSR FOR ALL FORMS COUNTRY MUSIC, TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY, COMMERCIALIZED AND "THRE REAL THING." AUDIENCES HERE WANT MORE.

10. ONE INHERENT CONFLICT WAS BETWEEN LOCAL DEMANDS ON THE GROUP AND THE DEMANDS OF THE FILM CREW DOING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A US TV SPECIAL ON TOUR. THIS SURFACED ESPECIALLY DURING HEAVY LENINGRAD FILMING SCHEDULE, WHICH ABORTED SOVIET TV COVERAGE THERE AND OTHER KOFF-STAGE CONTACTS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT IF FUTURE SUCH CONTRACTS MADE BY PAG, THE US TV SPONSOR PAY FOR TWO OR THREE EXTRA DAYS IN TOUR SO THAT FILMING TIME WILL NOT CONFLICT WITH PROPER TOUR PURPOSES. DESPITE PROBLEMS, US TV HAD EXCELLENT FILMING AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AND THEY HAVE PROMISED EMBASSY HALF-INCH VIDEOTAPE OF BOTH FEATURE ITEMS AND 30-MINUTE TV SPECIAL, WHICH WE CAN USE HERE AS FOLLOW-UP. STOESEL

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